

Key Messages

Chronic Disease Risk Reduction

- Small improvements in diet and physical activity can make big changes in overall health even if weight loss is not achieved. Decreasing intake by 100 calories per day or increasing physical activity by 100 calories per day will result in 10# weight loss in a year's time. For example, a daily 20 minute walk or decreasing a regular can of soda pop per day.
- Decreasing weight by 5-7% body weight (i.e., 10# for 200# person) decreases diabetes incidence by 58 percent for persons at high risk for Type 2 diabetes.
- 5-15% loss of excess body weight reduces risk of cardiovascular disease resulting in lower blood pressure, lower blood sugar, improved lipid levels.
- Regular physical activity—30-60 minutes most days of the week—can decrease blood pressure 4-9 mmHg.
- A DASH-style diet (low in saturated fat, cholesterol, and total fat and high in fruits and vegetables and fat-free or low-fat milk products) can decrease blood pressure by up to 14 mmHg.
- Eating fruits and vegetables more than three times a day reduces the risk of having a stroke or death from cardiovascular disease by nearly a quarter compared with those who eat them less than once per day.

Eat more fruits and veggies!

- Offer new food to child 7-10 times before they decide to try it or like it.
- Parents and adults around children need to eat fruits and vegetables for children to eat them. Be a good role model.
- Pre-prepare or buy pre-prepared fruits and vegetables to make them “quick snacks”, i.e., washed and sitting in front of refrigerator for an after school snack.
- Fruits and vegetables don't have to be fresh to have nutritional value. Frozen, canned, or dried also count.

Increase physical activity.

- Encourage family physical activity outings, such as devoting ½ day per weekend for family fun time.
- Incorporate physical activity into day such as taking the stairs, walking when appropriate to the store or parking further away from store entrances.
- Dress for the season. Outdoor physical activity can happen all year round if person dresses appropriately.
- Recommend indoor options in your community such as community trails, school or park and recreation options. Take kids to the park.

Limit “screen time”.

- No TV for children under three years and no more than two hours of total screen time a day for older kids.

- No TVs in bedrooms.
- No TV in dining areas.
- Keep TV in a cabinet or closet, out-of-sight except when in use.

Understand what a portion is.

- Never eat anything larger than your fist.
- Eat smaller portions of each food and allow for seconds if still hungry.
- Don't use food as a reward, pacifier, or punishment.

Limit sweetened beverages.

- Limit regular soda pop, fruit drinks, sweet tea and specialty coffees.
- Encourage water and low-fat milk.
- Don't overdo on fruit juice. Four to eight ounces per day for children and eight ounces per day for adults is plenty.

Other messages.

- Breastfeeding is best for the first year.
- Parents need to provide good food choices and allow children to decide whether to eat or not.
- Eating at home with family is important for development of healthy eating habits.
- Limit fast foods and eating out to special occasions.